THE

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THE LETTER-BOX.

No. 62.

TO THE EDITOR.

Lex et religio junxerunt fœdera, pravas
Hæc hominum mentes comprimit, illa manus.—ODO.

"WHAT is your opinion," says a worthy pastor of an unworthy flock, "what is your opinion, Brother Spintext, of the *Devil?*" "Why verily brother," was the reply, "I consider his black worship a great friend to *our* cloth; for had there been no Devil, there would be no need of parsons!" May I not justly add, "nor of *lawyers* either?" Certainly. For whence springs the necessity of laws, but from those diabolical and ungovernable passions with which the aforesaid black gentleman is pleased to afflict us? Were that noble principle unplanted in our hearts, "Do unto others as thou wouldst be done unto:" Did the mild precepts of Christianity sway our actions, and controul our passions, what would become of our lawyers? Alack, and well-a-day, their awful wigs would soon be powder-less, and their parchments converted to drum-heads. But the gentry of the long robe need not entertain any fears on *this* head; for the Devil seems just as busily at work as ever, cutting out fresh animosities for the exercise of their oratorical faculties. It is well known that the best things in the world are ridiculed, not even excepting the profession of which I write; and amongst other stigmas cast on the members of it, that of *dishonesty* is not the least; but how far they merit it I do not pretend to determine, neither am I

at all inclined to be practically instructed. What says some arch wag of a poet on this occasion?

1.

A thick-twisted brake, in the time of a storm,
Seem'd kindly to cover a sheep;
So snug for awhile he lay shelter'd and warm,
It quietly sooth'd him asleep.

2.

The clouds are now scatter'd, the winds are at peace,
The sheep to its pasture inclin'd;
But ah! the fell thicket lays hold of his fleece,
His coat's left a forfeit behind.

3.

My friend! who the thicket of law never try'd,
Consider before you get in;
Tho' judgment and sentence are pass'd on your side.
By Jove you'll be fleeced to the skin.

The day being extremely gloomy, I seized my pen with a resolution to compose an elaborate lecture upon heads, but when I consider how futile it would prove on the present occasion, my intentions are altered. I might just as well make a light-house of a turnip-lantern, and congratulate myself on having performed a very useful and philanthropical action. Besides, lawyers are dangerous animals to meddle with, and a certain proverb about "edged tools," is most tenaciously fixed in my remembrance. But what, Mr. Editor, is to be done in this dilemma? If I do *not* proceed, a fig for my short letter! On second thoughts, I'll tell you a story well worthy of the before-mentioned gentry's attention and imitation. It is an instance of *veracity*.

A Spanish cavalier, having assassinated a Moorish gentleman, instantly fled from justice. He was vigorously pursued; but, availing himself of a sudden turn in the road, he leaped, unperceived, over a garden wall. The proprietor, who was also a Moor, happened to be at that time walking in the garden; the Spaniard fell upon his knees before him, acquainted him with his case, and, in the most pathetic manner, implored concealment. The Moor listened to him with compassion, and generously promised his assistance. He then locked him in a summer-house, and left him with an assurance that, when night approached, he would provide for his escape. A few hours afterwards, the dead body of his son was brought to him, and the description of the murderer exactly agreed with the appearance

pearance of the Spaniard whom he then had in custody. He concealed the horror and suspicion which he felt; and retiring to his chamber, remained there 'till midnight. Then going privately into the garden he opened the door of the summer-house, and thus accosted the cavalier:—"Christian! the youth whom you have murdered was my *only son!* your crimes merit the severest punishment. But I have solemnly pledged my word for your security, and I disdain to violate even a rash engagement with a cruel enemy." He conducted the Spaniard to the stables, and furnishing him with one of his swiftest mules, "Fly," said he, "whilst the darkness of the night conceals you. Your hands are polluted with blood; but God is just; and I humbly thank him that my faith is unspotted, and that I have resigned judgment unto him."

I have another story at hand; but *ne quid nimis.* "What's that?" say the ladies. Why simply that "too much of one thing (their ladyships only and always excepted) is good for nothing."

I therefore subscribe myself,
Their and *your* most obedient, and very humble
servant,

X.

Irish Peasant's Method of spending Sunday.

[From Miss Owenson's Patriotic Sketches of Ireland.]

WHATEVER hardships the Irish peasant submits to during the week, it can never be said that,

"Sunday shines no sabbath-day to him."

Apparently endowed with the singular faculty of being periodically happy, the hallowed day brings with it to him a temporary oblivion of every care, and the transient possession of every enjoyment, which his fancy (little schooled in pleasurable speculation) can devise. Early on a Sunday morning, a cabin, cleaner than usual, exhibits at its door a groupe very different in appearance from that it sheltered the preceding day. The lower Irish, passionately fond of dress, and without the means of gratifying their dominant passion, confine their wishes to the hard-earned suit which the mass-house, or dance on Sunday, or the fair of their market-town, affords an opportunity of displaying. Thus the scanty drapery of wretchedness is exchanged, not only for the garb of comfort, but of ostentation; and it is not unusual to behold even ornamental finery on

those on Sunday, who during the rest of the week were worse clothed than the poorest mendicant in England.

The young men go in groupes to the mass-house, generally dressed in white gowns and coloured petticoats; with their rug cloaks hanging on one arm, and their shoes and stockings on the other. When they approach the chapel they bathe their feet in the first stream, and assume those articles of luxury which are never drawn on but for shew, and the public gaze of the parish. After prayers both sexes (and of all ages) generally adjourn to the fields, to witness a hurling-match, or some of those manly sports to which the lower Irish are so passionately addicted. One of them, the *cathu-clogh*, or "flinging of the stone," is precisely the same with the ancient Greek pastime of the *discus*. The candidate who pants for the fame of those

"Virtues that are placed in nerve and bone,"

takes a stone of immense weight in his right hand, inclines his body a little forward, advances one leg, poises his arm, and after two or three balancing motions, flings it from him to a considerable distance. These national amusements are not confined to the peasantry, the young gentlemen of the adjoining counties frequently engage in them.

Although the fare of Sunday seldom rises beyond the accustomed potatoes and milk of the rest of the week; some few half-pence are always spared from the household purse to purchase the pleasures which the Sunday cake bestows. In the centre of a field near some *petit auberge*, a distaff is fixed in the earth, on which is placed a large flat cake; this cake is the signal of pleasure, and becomes the reward of talent. The young and old of both sexes, for miles round the neighbourhood, hasten to enjoy the pleasures of the cake, which is sometimes carried off by the best dancer, and sometimes by the archest wag of the company. At a little distance from this standard of revelry, is placed its chief agent the piper, who is always seated on the ground with a hole dug near him, into which the contributions of the assembly are dropped; the manner of bestowing these donations is attended with a little gallantry not to be passed over in silence. At the end of every jig, the piper is paid by the young man who dances it, and who endeavours to enhance the value of the gift, by first bestowing it on his fair partner; and though a penny a jig is esteemed very good pay, yet the gallantry or ostentation of the contributor, anxious at once to appear generous in the eyes of his mistress, or to outstep the liberality of his rivals, sometimes trebles the sum which the piper usually receives. I have been at some of these cakes, and have invariably observed

served the inordinate passion for dancing, so prevalent among the Irish peasants. It is indeed very rare to find an individual among them who has not been for some time under the tuition of a dancing-master. Thus passes away the sabbath of an Irish peasant, the first hours of the day are devoted to religion, the rest to the enjoyment of such pleasures as lie within the limited scope of his acquisition. Sometimes led by the light of nature, sometimes restrained by the shades of prejudice; alternately governed by truth and error, his conduct is only to be judged by the circumstances under which he is reared.

QUEEN's BIRTH DAY,

JANUARY 18, 1809.

THE celebration of her majesty's birth day (who completed her 64th year on the 19th of May last) took place this day, and was, as usual, observed with every demonstration of joy, and her majesty's officers of state and attendants in general gave entertainments.

Soon after nine o'clock, their majesties, the princesses, the dukes of York, Clarence, Sussex, Cumberland, and Cambridge, breakfasted together at the queen's palace. The duke of Kent was prevented from attending by indisposition.

About eleven o'clock, the Princess Charlotte of Wales arrived at the queen's palace, to pay her respects. In the course of the morning, the bishops of Chester and Salisbury, and a number of dignified clergy, attended at the queen's palace, to pay their early and private congratulations to her majesty.

About two o'clock the drawing room commenced, preceded by the usual formalities, the presentation of the boys educating in Christ's-hospital for the naval service, &c. &c. the particulars of all which we think it unnecessary to detail to the exclusion of more important matter, neither would they exhibit any novelty to the reader whose memory is tenacious of these things.

The princess of Wales entered the drawing-room about ten minutes before three o'clock, and was conducted to her majesty by Mr. St. Leger, her chamberlain; her royal highness, after paying her respects to her majesty, passed on and shook hands with the princesses and the duke of Cambridge. The prince of Wales came into the room about five minutes after.

At the court there were present, besides her majesty, their royal highness the prince of Wales, the duke of York, the dukes of Clarence, Cumberland, Sussex, and Gloucester; the princess Augusta, Elizabeth, Mary, Sophia, Amelia; the princess of Wales, the duchess of York, and the Princess Sophia of Gloucester;

Gloucester; the archbishops of Canterbury and York; the lord chancellor, the lord president of the council, the lord privy seal, the first lord of the treasury, the chancellor of the exchequer, the three secretaries of state, the first lord of the admiralty, the presidents of the boards of trade and controul, the speaker of the house of commons, the attorney and solicitor general, the judge of the admiralty, the king's advocate, the lord mayor, the recorder, and sheriffs of London, and a very numerous concourse of the nobility, &c. of both sexes.—The presentations, as usual on such occasions, were also numerous.

His majesty, the prince, and the royal dukes, were habited in full-dress regimentals, and the greater part of the gentlemen in naval and military uniforms.

The following were among the most conspicuous of the female dresses:

Her majesty.—Scarlet velvet petticoat, with black lace thrown over in tasteful draperies, tied up with diamond bows; the side draperies, rows of gold cockle-shells and chains, strings of pearls and pearl tassels; the pocket-holes ornamented with gold cords and tassels; the bottom of the petticoat gold chains; body and train of scarlet and gold velvet, trimmed with black lace.

Her royal highness the princess of Wales—A superb gold and white leopard tissue satin train and petticoat, embroidered and inlaid all round with coloured stones to form vine leaves and bunches of grapes, interwoven with branches of coral. The drapery and pocket holes of royal purple, and gold leopard tissue satin, with a superb border, to correspond with the petticoat and train. The body and sleeves of gold leopard tissue satin, embroidered and inlaid with coloured stones. Grecian wreaths of diamonds, superbly set with bunches of roses and stars. Her head-dress was set with diamonds, and a plume of ostrich feathers.

The Princess Charlotte of Wales—A gold slip, with a rich Brussels point lace frock over it.

Princess Elizabeth—A scarlet velvet petticoat, the bottom richly embroidered in shells of matted gold, right side drapery of gold beaded net, with a tassel fringe; left side points of gold velvet tissue, ornamented with a shell embroidery in gold; the drapery suspended with diamonds; train of scarlet and gold velvet tissue; head-dress of feathers and diamonds.

Princess Amelia—A black velvet petticoat, with a drapery across the front, of black velvet and gold tissue, supported by wreaths of gold currant leaves in stripes, the ground work sprigs of currant leaves, of bright and matted gold, fringe at the bottom; head-dress, feathers and diamonds.

Princess Augusta—Spanish brown velvet petticoat, embroidered with gold; a wreath of gold laurel round the bottom;

sashes

sashes of brown and gold velvet thrown across the petticoat, bordered with wreaths of laurel and berries; the draperies bordered with Grecian fillagree of gold, tied up with gold cords and tassels. Body and train of brown and gold velvet.

The duchess of York—A mazarine velvet dress, the petticoat covered with a gold net, spangled all over, and trimmed with Maltese fringe; gold cord and tassels to correspond. Head-dress of ostrich feathers, with precious stones; the neck adorned by a collection of precious stones and diamonds.

Princess Sophia of Gloucester—Blue satin petticoat, embroidered with silver; blue and silver tissue train, richly ornamented with silver; head-dress, diamonds and feathers.

The dowager countess of Dysart—A crimson velvet train and petticoat, with drapery embroidered in Maltese gold; the body and sleeves trimmed with point lace and diamonds; head-dress, a turban of crimson velvet and gold, with ostrich feathers, and a profusion of diamonds.

Lady Arden—White crape petticoat with gold shells, and purple velvet wreath, the drapery embroidered on purple and gold; train of purple velvet, trimmed with gold, and ornamented with point lace.

The hon. Misses Perceval—Brussels lace petticoat, ornamented with bunches of variegated holly, body and train of white satin, trimmed with scarlet velvet and holly wreath, rich point lace sleeves.

Countess dowager of Pembroke—White and gold petticoat, rich drapery of maroon satin, with gold tassels, maroon satin train, trimmed with gold.

Lady Diana Herbert—Lilac satin petticoat, gold border and drapery, fastened with elegant gold ornaments and tassels; lilac train, trimmed with gold.

Hon. Mrs. G. Villiers—White satin petticoat, scarlet and gold border, ornamented with black lace; white satin train, trimmed with scarlet and gold.

Countess of Carlisle—Ruby velvet and white satin draperies, trimmed with imperial gold border, and a profusion of gold tassels, rope, &c. robe trimmed with point lace; head-dress, a ruby turban, jewels and feathers.

Countess of Chesterfield—A white satin petticoat, embroidered in gold of antique design, draperies ruby-coloured velvet, embroidered in chains of matted gold, interspersed with branches of palm leaves and bloom of brilliant gold; the draperies suspended by cords and tassels of gold; train of ruby-coloured velvet; head-dress, feathers and diamonds.

Lady Louisa Erskine—A white crape petticoat and draperies embroidered in silver vine leaves and grapes, the borders finished with small cockle shells of matted silver, draperies suspended

by cords and tassels, train of blue velvet trimmed with silver; head-dress, feathers and diamonds.

Lady Mayoress—Dress of white crape, with a rich and elegant silver oak and ivy border; a brilliant diamond necklace, ear-rings, and bracelets; head-dress, a superb diamond tiara feather, surmounted by a beautiful plume of lofty white ostrich feathers.

The following new year's ode was performed, as is customary, in honour of the day:

FULL-ORB'D in equinoctial ſkies
When the pale moon malignant rides,
And bids the howling tempeſt riſe,
And ſwells the ocean's briny tides,
Dreadful againſt the ſounding ſhore
The winds and waves tumultuous roar,
The torrent-braving mound in vain
The ſtormy inroad would reſtrain,
The ſurges with reſiſtleſs ſway
Force o'er the laboured mole their way,
Scorn ev'ry weak reſource of human toil,
O'erwhelm the peopled town, and waſte the cultur'd ſoil.

But when, by native fences barr'd
From billowy rage, the happier land,
And rocky cliffs for ever ſtand
To the wide-watered coaſt a guard,
Such as on Vecta's ſouthern ſteep
Look down defiance on the raging deep,
Such as on Dover's breezy down
On Gallia's hoſtile borders frown,
Tho' billows urging billows roar
And idly beat againſt the ſhore,
While from the heights ſublime the ſwain
Mocks the vain efforts of the foaming main,
'Till nature bids the deluged ſurge ſubſide,
Huſh'd is the tempeſt's voice, and refluent rolls the tide.

So o'er Europa's ravaged plain
We ſaw the torrent wild of war
Reſiſtleſs ſpread its iron reign,
And ſcatter ruin wide and far;
The embattled wall, the warlike band,
Vainly the tyrant's courſe withſtand;
Before the impious ſons of Gaul
The legions fly, the bulwarks fall;
Yet Britain's floating caſtles ſweep
Invaſion from her ſubject deep,
Yet by her rocks ſecure from harm,
Securer by her patriot arm,
Iberia turns the battle's tide,
Reſiſts the injurious tyrant's pride,
While, freely floating in the ambient ſky,
Sacred to freedom's cauſe, their mingled enſigns fly.

Interesting

Interesting Account of the last Days and Death of Richard II. King of England, in 1399.

(Continued from Page 64.)

THE editor re-commences the manuscript with the domestic arrangements of the king, before his departure for Ireland. These details have curiosity, *naiveté*, and interest. The king leaves his uncle, the duke of York, regent, and recommends to him, as well as to Scroop, lord high treasurer, Isabella of France, his wife, with this observation, "that she nor her people had no faults!" He then commanded a physician, named Master Pol, to take as much care of the queen as of his own body; and gave a like injunction to Sir Philip de Vache, the queen's chamberlain, that he should consider Master Pol, and the confessor, sovereign guardians of the queen. He afterwards took these three persons severally apart, and after swearing them to speak the truth, demanded their opinion of the lady de Coucy, governess of the queen, of whom he appears to have had some suspicion, namely, whether they thought her sufficiently good, *gentille* and prudent, to possess such a situation with the queen of England. Then* answered Sir Phil. de Vache, and Master Pol, "Very dear Sire, here is the confessor, who knows the ladies from beyond sea, better than we; let him say of her what he thinks fit." The confessor begged the king's mercy, that he made him speak to Sir Phil. de Vache, or Master Pol, for the lady, "lui en pourroit porter mal talent."

[*Porter mal talent* is not in Cotgrave, nor the modern dictionaries; the meaning evidently is, that the lady would harbour a grudge against him.]

This was sufficient explanation, and upon new urgency from the king, all three declared that she was not worthy so noble an employ; the reasons which they give are very remarkable—"She keeps too great state; full as much as the queen does, for she has livery from you for eighteen horses, without the livery of her husband, when he comes and goes, and she also keeps two or three goldsmiths, and seven or eight embroiderers, and two or three *ironmongers! (sic Tallandieu)* and two or three furriers, as well as you and the queen; and she has built a chapel, which will cost 1400 nobles. When she lived in France, she could do with much less." The king gave orders that she should be sent back to France, and that all her debts should be paid, and put Lady Mortimer in her place.

* The style of the MS. (from the æra) is diligently adhered to in the translation, in preference to decoration.

The king and queen, before separation, *assisted* together in the service of St. George's-chapel, Windsor. *The king sung a collect*,* and after he had made his offering, took the queen in his arms, very lovingly, and kissed her more than forty times, saying piteously, " Adieu, Madam, 'till I see you again, I commend myself to you." And then the queen began to weep, saying to the king, " Alas, Sir, do you leave me here ?" Then the king had his eyes filled with tears, and was on the point of weeping. Then the king and queen took wine and spices together, right at the door of the church, and afterwards the king kissed her, and took the queen, and lifted her from the ground, and held her a long while in his arms, and kissed her full ten† times, saying always, " Adieu, Madam, 'till I see you again," and then put her down, and kissed her three times; and, by our Lady! I never saw so great a lord make so great a feast, or shew so great a love to a lady, as did King Richard to his queen.

[Thus the author, notes the editor, was an ocular witness of many facts which he recites.]

Froissart, and all the historians, coincide in this attachment of Richard to his queen.

She was not quite ten years old, " and it is a great pity, (says the MS.) that they were ever separated, for they never saw one another again."

The editor then proceeds with the plots of Henry, (afterwards King Henry IV.) while an exile in France, and attributes his ultimate success with the discontented nation, to one hundred and fifty *pairs of letters*,‡ which he sent full of false accusation against King Richard and his government. " He said that Richard intended to bring secretly to his court, a croud of knights and lords, French, Bretons, and Germans, and that by their assistance, he would *lord* it, *(seigneioriroit)* and domineer more grandly (sic) and more powerfully in the kingdom of England, than any of his predecessors, kings, had done, and then he would be able to impose such subsidies, such tallages, such impositions, as he desired."

These letters, says the editor, had their effect. Scroop hastened to Ireland, to inform the king. At the news, recollecting what the late duke of Lancaster had often told him of his son, " Ha," he cried, " good uncle of Lancaster, God have mercy on your soul! If I had believed you, this man would not

* Canute was a psalm-singer, and used to join the monks,(15 Script. 505.) In the 16th century, princes sung in the service. Burn. Mus. ii. 573. Editors.

† Bien. It may mean heartily.

‡ This expression is very obscure. M. Paris, 270, l. 6, uses it for fines. Editors.

not have vexed me, and you told me that I should do wrong to pardon him, for he still harasses me; three times have I pardoned his attempts upon me, and see, here is the fourth time he persecutes me."

He hastened to pass over to England, to defend the crown, which was flying from him; his army was about thirty-two thousand men, foreigners and natives, but the latter were ill affected. Some days after his landing in England, when he rose one morning to say his hours, as he was used to do, he leaned upon a window, and looked at the fields, where his army was lodged, and when he saw but very few people, was quite astonished: his army of thirty-two thousand was reduced to six thousand; all the rest had deserted during the night, and gone to join the duke of Lancaster; it was effected by the letters which the prince had sent to the king's army, as well as to the towns, commonalties, and great men of the realm, &c. All abandoned the unfortunate Richard; he abandoned himself; he quitted the few troops which remained with him, fearing lest they should deliver him up to the duke of Lancaster; for they were all mercenary strangers, prepared to sell themselves to the best bidder; this was the advice of his counsel; he had no alternative, but in the choice of his retreat; the earl of Salisbury, and many others, wished him to embark and retire to Bourdeaux; the earl of Huntingdon, his brother, was of opinion that he should shut himself up in the castle of Conway, where he would be in safety. "We shall be so also, at Bourdeaux," said the king. "Yes, Sire, but that would be to abandon every thing; they will say that you are guilty; that you have deposed yourself. Stay in England; this castle gives you the freedom of the sea; you will be always in time to withdraw to Bourdeaux, or elsewhere, if events force you to quit the kingdom." The king adopted this advice, and sent the earl of Huntingdon to negociate with the duke of Lancaster.

When he came into the duke's presence, Huntingdon dropped one knee on the ground, and said, "Sir, it is perfectly right that I should pay you obeisance, for your father was the son of a king, and my wife is your sister." "Rise, brother in law," said the duke, "drily enough, *(assez sechement,)* you have not always done so." Afterwards, taking him by the hand, he drew him apart, and they talked a long time together, but what they said, I do not know.

[This shows further, that the author was an eye-witness, whether he was in the army of the duke of Lancaster, or what is more probable, in the suite of the earl of Huntingdon.]

The duke kept Huntingdon with him, 'till the return of the earl of Northumberland, whom he had on his side sent to the king; he was detained as an hostage; he did more, he gave

Huntingdon his own order;* and took away that of Richard. Huntingdon was quite *nonplussed* (interdit) and began to weep, and remained a long time without speaking. The earl of Rutland, son of the duke of York, said to him sneeringly, "Good cousin, don't be vexed, for, please God things will do well."

Another advantage, which the duke of Lancaster took of the arrival of the earl of Huntingdon, was to compel him to write to the king, to say, that he had entire confidence in the earl of Northumberland, whom the duke had sent, and Northumberland himself was charged with the letter; when he appeared before the king, the latter asked him, if he had not met his brother on the road, "Yes, Sir," he replied, "and here is a letter which he has given me for you." Northumberland, in the name of the duke of Lancaster, demanded no other conditions of peace, than the restoration of the estates of the house of Lancaster, and the appointment of the duke to the office of chief justiciary of England.† The king deliberated in private with his friends, and put a confidence in them, with which he would have done well to dispense. "In truth," said he, "whatever agreement or peace he makes with me, if I am ever able to get the advantage, I will put him to a death as proportionally cruel, as he has gained in this way." *(Je le ferai mourir mauvaisement, ainsi comme il a gaigne.)* Notwithstanding, the conditions of the peace were so reasonable, that they could not be refused. The bishop of Carlisle only advised the precaution of swearing Northumberland upon the gospel and the eucharist; he swore, and may be compared, says our author, to Judas or Ganelon, for he swore falsely upon our Lord's body.

* Livery or badge.

† This was, in that time and long before the prime minister. Editors.

(To be continued.)

On the CHANGE *of* COLOUR *in* ANIMALS.

[From the Monthly Magazine.]

To the Editor,

Sir,

If the following observations on the change of colour, which takes place in some animals at different seasons of the year, and on one or two of those animals which are remarkable for this change, come within the scope of your valuable miscellany, they may lead, perhaps, to a discussion of the subject among your scientific correspondents, and enable us to ascertain, with some

some degree of certainty, the nature and causes of that change: for although the all-wise care of the Creator is abundantly evident in the change which does take place, I do not know that the nature or causes of that change have been at all explained on scientific principles.

I have confined my remarks to a very few of the animals which exhibit this change in their colour, and to those too which are either very common, or to be met with in Great Britain, because it is only in those animals that I have observed the facts of which I speak, and to which I could wish to direct the attention of the naturalist. The first animal which I shall mention is the common hare (*lepus timidus* of Linné). This animal, which is well known, is found in every quarter of the world, but is no where more frequent than in these kingdoms; it is so common indeed as to render any general description unnecessary.

During the spring and summer months the down of the hare, though varied in external appearance, is uniformly of a bluish grey towards the roots. This is the case not only on the back and sides of the hare, when the tips of the down are of a brown colour, but also on the belly, where the down is white; but in winter, or what the laws of England have denominated the hare-hunting season, the down becomes much finer; and what was formerly of a blue-grey colour is now of a pure white; and during very severe winters in the north of Scotland, this whiteness extends almost to the extremities of the down, so as to render the back of the hare almost as white as the abdomen. This is a fact which I should suppose to be familiar to almost every person.

The next animal which I shall mention is the mountain hare (*lepus variabilis* of Linné). In this species of hare, which is frequent on the mountains of Norway, Lapland, and Russia, and which is also found in the north of Scotland, the change of colour is still more remarkable. The mountain hares, which are found in the Highlands of Scotland, are somewhat less than the common hare; their ears are much shorter, and they have more slender legs. In summer their colour is very much like that of the common hare, but rather of a lighter dun. In autumn they appear at a distance of a tawny grey colour; but as the winter approaches, this colour begins to change, and at Christmas they are all of a pure white, except the tips of their ears, which are black, and which, I believe, never change. Their summer coat begins to change its colour in the month of September, and does not re-appear 'till the month of April. In summer, and while the weather continues mild, they are only to be met with singly on the summits of the highest mountains; but in winter, and particularly if the snow lies long, they venture down into the plains and shaded places,

places, and continue to graze together in flocks. They always return, however, to the mountains as soon as the snow begins to disappear.

They burrow in the snow, and are of so pure a white, that they are not easily distinguished. They appear to have a very quick eye, and a strong sense of smell, as there is a considerable difficulty in getting near enough to shoot them; but if the snow is hard, they are easily caught with greyhounds; for they have not either the strength or swiftness of the common hare.

The next animal which I shall mention, as remarkable for changing its colour is a species of the weasel, which I have met with in the West Highlands of Scotland, and which is common in the little island of Lismore, in Argyleshire. During the summer months this little animal resembles in colour and appearance the common weasel *mustela vulgaris* of Linné). The length of its body is about seven inches, and of its tail about three inches—the back and sides are of a pale reddish or yellowish brown, and its belly is white: it is a very lively animal, but, like the common weasel, has a very unpleasant smell. In winter, its appearance is considerably altered, and the whole of its fur is of a pure white, except on the ears, and a small part of the tail, where the fur always remains black. I have seen weasels of a pure white in different parts of Scotland, and particularly in Dumfriesshire; but was taught to believe that they were only a variety of the common weasel, and that they were white in the summer as well as in winter. But this I am inclined to think is not the case, as I could not ascertain a white weasel had ever been seen during summer; while, on the contrary, I heard it always remarked by farmers, that they never appeared but to announce a severe snow-storm. I should rather think too that the white weasel, which is seen in the south of Scotland, is not the same species with that which is common in the island of Lismore. But whether there is a species of this animal, which, like the mountain hare, changes its colour with the change of season, or whether it is only a variety of the *mustela vulgaris*, which is found in Lismore, I have not been able to determine. I am certain that the common weasel does not always change its colour, as I have frequently seen them of their ordinary brown here during winter. I am not certain that a brown weasel has ever been seen, during the cold season, in the island of Lismore, or that a white one had ever been observed in summer. I should be extremely happy to have the observations of some of your correspondents on this subject, and particularly with regard to the different species or varieties of the weasel, which are, or have been, observed in this country.

There are one or two other animals, Sir, which I might enumerate here as exhibiting a considerable change in their co-

lour

lour at different seasons, but I shall conclude this part of these remarks with a few observations on the ptarmigan, the (*tetrao lagapus* of Linné).

This bird, which is rather larger than the common partridge, is found in the north and west of Scotland, in considerable quantities, particularly in the Hebrides. It is amongst the most stupid of all birds, for if a stone or snow-ball is thrown so as to fall near it, you may go up and knock it dead with a stick, as it appears so much astonished, that it seldom attempts to fly away. They never attempt to fly in a high wind; and except in the latter end of summer, we seldom meet with two or three of them together. They frequently build their nests under the snow, and are always found on the shaded sides of the mountains. But I mention this bird chiefly on account of the change of colour, which its feathers undergo.

During summer the ptarmigan is not easily distinguished from the partridge at a distance, as the colour of the feathers is so much alike in both. But in winter the whole of the feathers of the ptarmigan, except two, are of a pure white. These two feathers, which are in the tail of the bird, remain of a black colour both summer and winter.

In this change of colour in the animals which I have mentioned, we see a beautiful provision of nature, in which the wisdom and goodness of the creator are equally conspicuous. This change is both a source of security and of additional comfort to the animals. The timid and short-lived hare is not only persecuted by lordly man, but is equally preyed upon by the wolf, the fox, the hawk, and the eagle; and the more they are secluded from the haunts of men, the more liable they are to be destroyed by these last-mentioned depredators; and had they remained of a dark colour, while the mountains were covered with snow, they could not have stirred abroad, without being exposed to certain destruction: but by the change which as I have shewn takes place in their colour, and particularly in the mountain hare, they are not so easily discovered by the hawk or hungry eagle. The same remark applies to the weasel and ptarmigan; they too are preyed upon by the hawk and eagle.

But if the security which this change of colour gives the animals is great, the comfort which accompanies it is not less wonderful. It is particularly observed, that as the down becomes white, it becomes also of a much finer texture; and modern chemistry has taught us that fine down is a very slow conductor of heat, and that the finer the down, the less is its conducting power; while it is also ascertained, that white and shining surfaces tend very much to retard the egress of heat from any body. These circumstances, as I have said, Sir, are very evident; but the manner in which this change of colour

is brought about is not so apparent. I shall, therefore, conclude this short paper with a few observations on the structure of the common integuments, but chiefly of the hair and feathers, with a view, if possible, of throwing a little light on this part of the subject.

Each hair consists of a bulb and a stalk, and sometimes, as in long hairs, of branches. The bulb is placed in the cellular membrane, under the true skin, and consists of two vesicles and a nucleus. The nucleus appears to be a quantity of fibres, coiled up; but between each vesicle there is a small quantity of fluid.

The stalk of the hair consists of corticle or bark, a cortex, and medulla, or pith. The corticle and cortex are derived from the vesicles of the bulb, and have always a small quantity of fluid betwixt them. The pith is composed of parallel fibrils, which are derived from the nucleus, and we always find that there is more or less fluid intermixed with these fibrils. The anatomy of a feather is very similar to that of a hair, and any theory that can account for the change of colour in the one, will apply equally to the other. My opinion is, that the colour depends upon the quantity of fluid in the stalk of the hair; but as this is a subject that merits some attention, and one that I am anxious to see discussed, I shall defer giving my reasons for being of this opinion 'till some future opportunity.

I am, Sir, your's, &c.

ANDREW HALLIDAY.

Nottingham, November 8, 1808.

EXTRAORDINARY ADVENTURE.

THE following interesting account of the destruction of a royal tiger, by one of the officers of the 2d battalion of the 7th regiment N. I. stationed at Kaira, we have just received from a correspondent, whose favours we shall always be proud to acknowledge. On the 15th of June, some of the officers of the corps formed a party to visit the celebrated ruins of Mahmoodabad. On approaching, they were alarmed by a sound like the roar of a royal tiger. They did not, however, immediately see the animal, and proceeded towards the ruins; but, on advancing a little further, he suddenly burst upon their view, in all his terrors, and sprang at them with indescribable ferocity. A precipitate retreat was the natural consequence, and one of the gentlemen, who was but indifferently mounted, perceiving that he could not depend on his horse, with the promptitude of a vigorous and decisive mind, directed his course to a tree, which he immediately ascended, with his fowling-piece in his hand. His victim thus singled,

the tiger gave over the pursuit of the others, and bounded on the horse, who stood paralysed with fear at the foot of the tree. At this time the gentleman in the tree took a cool and steady aim at the savage, and wounded him, though not mortally. The tiger feeling himself wounded, retreated to some distance, but almost immediately returned with increased fury. In the mean time, the officer had reloaded, and taking aim at him again, while venting his rage on the miserable horse, wounded him mortally.

On the first attack of the tiger, the retreat of the party was too precipitate and general to admit of individual attentions. Each person trusted to the speed of his horse, and our hero was undesignedly left behind. But when, on rallying in a neighbouring village, his comrades perceived that he was missing, they instantly armed themselves, and returned with a party of the natives to the spot. They came in sight of the tree just as the tiger had received his mortal wound. He again retreated, and was traced into a jungle, where they found him writhing in agony. On their approach, he collected his remaining strength into one final effort, and prepared to spring, but the spear of a native prevented him, and put an end to his struggles. On measuring him, he was found to extend ten feet eight inches from the nose to the tip of the tail. The poor horse was so mangled, that he was immediately put to death. —*Bombay Gazette.*

An ANECDOTE.

THE Athenians and Megarensians waged war a long time for the possession of Salamis. The Athenians were defeated, and passed a law, that it should be death to any one who advised sailing to the attack of Salamis. Solon, superior to the fear of death, repealed the law in this manner:—He affected madness, and going into the forum, he sang elegiac songs of a martial strain. By these he roused the Athenians for the fight. Seized with the spirit of the muses and of Mars, they were immediately led out singing and shouting, and conquered the Megarenses. Salamis was again in the hands of the Athenians; and Solon became greatly admired, both for having, in a fit of insanity, repealed the law, and for conquering the enemy by music.

To such adventitious circumstances are even eminent men indebted for their fame and popularity. It, indeed, frequently happens, that the multitude can only be guided to measures for their own good by means of friendly delusions.

Answer, by C. Crews, of Newton Abbot, to Radius's Rebus, inserted the 28th of November.

THE graceful SWAN in water doth reside,
And o'er its summit smoothly seems to glide.

Answer, by W. D. Champion, of Bridgewater, to J. Saunders's Anagram, inserted December 5.

WHILST the shrill HORN sounds horridly afar,
And hostile legions issue forth to war,
The rustic swain, contented with his rank,
Attunes his PIPE beneath some pleasant bank.

¶¶ Similar answers have been received from S. Duck, and F. Arden, of South Petherton; J. Melhuish, of Honiton; J. Ball, and J. French, at Evershot school; C. Crews, of Newton Abbot; J. Fairweather, of Plymouth; J. W. of Charmouth; F. Russel, at Tiverton school; H. B. of Bridgewater; and J. Woodman, of North Curry.

Answer, by J. Melhuish, of Honiton, to R. Loosemore's Rebus, inserted the 5th of December.

I'VE just enquir'd, and have been told,
The PLAICE is in our market sold,
Which, when transpos'd, and join'd to *N*,
Will shew the much-fam'd PELICAN.

†§† A similar answer has been received from H. B. of Bridgewater; John Melhuish, of Honiton; J. Woodman, of North Curry; and F. Arden, and S. Duck, of South Petherton.

A REBUS, *by a Correspondent.*

A Plant, Sirs, transpose, add half of a fish,
You'll discover my name, and that's what I wish.

A CHARADE, *by T. Kite, of Chard.*

A Stigma oft to churls apply'd
You'll first with care detect;
A plural term you'll then decide,
And for my next select:
Conjoin the two, and you'll expound
What did, in days of yore,
Strike Albion's sons with dread profound,
Thrilling from shore to shore.

An ANAGRAM, *by J. A. Dyer, of Taunton.*

HOW has Lord Nelson lain, since dead?
The word demands attention;
Transpose the same, you'll in its stead
One of the senses mention;
One letter add, again transpose,
And then, if you'll believe me,
The property you thence disclose,
I wish some friend would give me.

POETRY.

WINTER.

DREARY winter o'er the plain
Spreads once more his mantle dun;
Frosty mists, and drizzling rain,
Chill the air, and mask the sun.

Music leaves the drooping grove;
Pleasure quits the blasted green;
Arbours, late the haunts of love,
All deserted now are seen!

Cheerful round the social hearth,
Where the well-trimm'd embers glow,
Cheating time with tales of mirth,
Sit the cot's promiscuous row.

Deep and dirty is the road,
Difficult to man and steed:
Round the opulent abode
Crowd the shivering sons of need.

Deal your alms now to the poor,
Ye with wealth and plenty blest!
Thus a passport you'll secure
To the realms of joy and rest.

But if you the beggar spurn
In a season such as this,
Can ye hope, beyond life's bourn,
Mercy's promis'd meed of bliss?

TO DEATH.

I Come not, death! with vain, untimely fears,
Urn-shadowing cypress, and the midnight dew,
To offer at thy shrine,
And deprecate thy wrath.

I bring not fear, in frenzy's robe array'd,
To own the ruling terrors of thy name,
And feed thy cruel pride
With murmurs of despair.

For what art thou, Oh death! that reason's eye
Should shun the menace of thy threat'ning might?
Or turn upon thy form
The gaze of wild dismay?

Or why should terror arm thy uprais'd hand
With shafts of anger, and the murderer's rage?
And throw around thy brows
The lightning's livid fires?

Were life the limit of the spirit's course,
The grave the barrier of her brief career,
Beyond whose loathsome bourn
No star of being gleam'd;

Had

Had nature to the winds of heav'n proclaim'd
No bright reversion that awaits the soul,
When bursting from her chains,
She seeks her kindred skies:

Did not religion from thy masked brow
Pluck the vain shadow of a mimic crown,
And lift the veiling cowl
To shew a seraph's smile:

Then, death, I'd hail thee monarch! and thy shrine,
Should hear my vows, and bear my proffer'd bribes,
To win the light of heav'n
One moment to my gaze!

I'd clasp the breast that loves me, and would swear,
In madness, that thy unrelenting hand
Never, with ruthless might,
Should rend affection's bands!

But since religion's clear, prevailing voice,
With words of mercy, tells the trembling soul
That Heaven has death ordain'd
Its minister of love!

Bring flow'rs, bring essence from the living rose,
And strew around the sickly couch of death,
From whence the spirit bounds
On her immortal wings.

Be this thy triumph and thy glorious boast,
Angel of death! that at thine awful call
The shadowing veil is rent,
Time's fleeting structure falls.

The seraph vision of the glowing mind,
The hope of genius, and the soul's desire,
Start into light and form,
Freed by thy transient pow'r!

Birmingham. P. M. J.

Lines written on seeing a View of Plenlimmon, in Wales.

IN silence is sunk the sweet harp of Llewillin;
And, Plenlimmon, thy echoes are still as the grave,
Save that o'er the rude steep the wild eagles are yelling,
And the deep distant roar of the surf-broken wave.

The minstrel no longer shall wide spread thy glory,
Nor inflame thy rough sons with the fire-breathing strain;
No poet shall tune his sad harp to thy story,
Nor weep for his brethren that crimson'd the plain.

Yet sacred for ever the echoes that rung
With the strains of Llewellin, tho' still as the grave,
Where Modred and mighty Cavello have sung;
Tho' nought be now heard but the surf-broken wave.

And still with sweet fervour and hallow'd devotion,
I mark where the Conway is whitened with foam,
Where he rolls over rocks his pure stream to the ocean,
And the banks where sweet minstrels would carelessly roam.

And hallow'd each vale, and each heath cover'd mountain,
Each streamlet that gushes their furrows along;
Each wood-cover'd steep, and each clear-flowing fountain;
Forgot by the muses, neglected in song.